

OYE Gender action research and knowledge development partnership

Background

SNV is a not-for-profit international development organization that applies practical know-how to make a lasting difference in the lives of people living in poverty. We use our extensive and long-term in-country presence to apply and adapt our top-notch expertise in agriculture, energy and WASH to local contexts. SNV has an annual turnover of €130 million, over 1,250 staff in more than 25 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We are proud to be a not-for-profit organization that uses project financing to implement our mission. This requires us to work efficiently and to invest in operational excellence.

In its new Strategic Plan period (2019 – 2022), SNV will more explicitly aim for systems change during project preparation and implementation - by strengthening institutions and kick-starting markets that help many more to escape poverty beyond our projects. We will continue to position ourselves as a premium organization, with decentralized management.

Scope of Research

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION: how young women and young men can be empowered economically, socially and psychologically, thereby addressing:

- Young women and young men's aspirations and ambitions regarding (self-) employment and entrepreneurship
- Tackling key challenges notably with regard to gender and age relationships
- Building on gender and age relationships that have the potential to enhance youth leadership

SNV (general introduction)

Since 2013, SNV is implementing its Opportunities for Youth Employment model in an increasing number of countries in Sub Saharan Africa. The model is market based and operating in Agriculture and Renewable energy sectors. Interventions start with the identification of concrete opportunities for (self-) employment for which young women and men are invited to express their ambitions. This entails that opportunity identification should take into account attractiveness and accessibility for young women and men, whereby gaps/obstacles such as lack of employability skills and missing market linkages are tackled by the OYE projects.

The OYE projects have demonstrated the pivotal importance of contributing to (socio-)economic **empowerment** of young women and young men. This entails that we go way further than creating "jobs" – which actually should result from effective interactions between young people and markets (not from artificial NGO project-contributions, as the development sector has seen for too many decades). This means that we need to place high importance to learning from experiences, from what works and what does not work, especially looking at enhanced empowerment, initiative, opportunity grabbing, leadership and resilience among the young women and men that our projects engage with.

In the SNV led Opportunities for Youth Employment projects, the inclusion of young women and young men requires specific attention. In the first place, we have set ambitious quantitative targets (50-50 balance). Second, we have realized that it also requires qualitative measures in order to tackle specific challenges and meet ambitions of young women and young men.

From experiences thus far, we have developed a number of measures to ensure inclusion of young women, as they are facing more obstacles in terms of mobility and access to productive resources compared to young men. These include:

- a. Undertake market scans (opportunity identification) with a solid gender lens with particular attention to opportunities in value chains that are particularly accessible, attractive and safe for young women.
- b. Ensure that the self-selection is based on ambitions that tally with identified opportunities in agriculture and sustainable energy, avoiding that young women drop-out because of preference of other trades.
- c. Ensure that (self-) selection of young women already has an explicit component of *encouragement*. Consider women and young female role models at this stage.
- d. Encouraging young women to combine the opportunities in agriculture and sustainable energy with additional “female” trades e.g. hairdressing.
- e. Take into account accessibility criteria for young women in training delivery, including locality (close to homesteads), allowing young women to take along their babies into training sessions, ensuring a safe and welcoming environment, whereby young women are not dominated by their male peers; the latter requires special responsibilities and competencies among trainers and coaches.
- f. The need to involve more female role models in training and coaching.
- g. Promote female only WhatsApp groups promoting peer-to-peer coaching and learning
- h. Where applicable encourage female-only saving and lending groups, as these groups also have high potential for peer to peer learning and inspiration.
- i. Further enhance the practice of “household dialogue” from SNV’s Balancing Benefits approach in order to get family support for young women to take part in the project activities, and giving them space, safety and respect in order to be empowered to engage in self-employment. This in turn must be explained as an empowerment that eventually will be beneficial to households (including parents and husbands).
- j. Provide additional coaching and mentoring for young women in self-employment. Our monitoring data indicate that young “OYE” women have 30% less income compared to their male peers.
- k. In order to attain maximum participation of female youth engaging successful OYE female youth at mobilisation stage has appeared to have a very encouraging effect on other young women.

This type of learning from project experiences has been and will continue to be of crucial importance. In addition, we need to expand our learning way beyond our project parameters, as the OYE model is meant to be applied in a responsive manner, instead of the traditional supply-driven manner. Hence, we essentially must open our “gender” windows beyond our “development boxes”.

This realization is also strongly based on the understanding that OYE should be effective in a market-based manner in an often neo-liberal context; we are aiming at connecting young people with markets that are often characterized by deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision. By applying our OYE push-match-pull model, young women and men are expected to become self-reliant and entrepreneurial and navigate networks

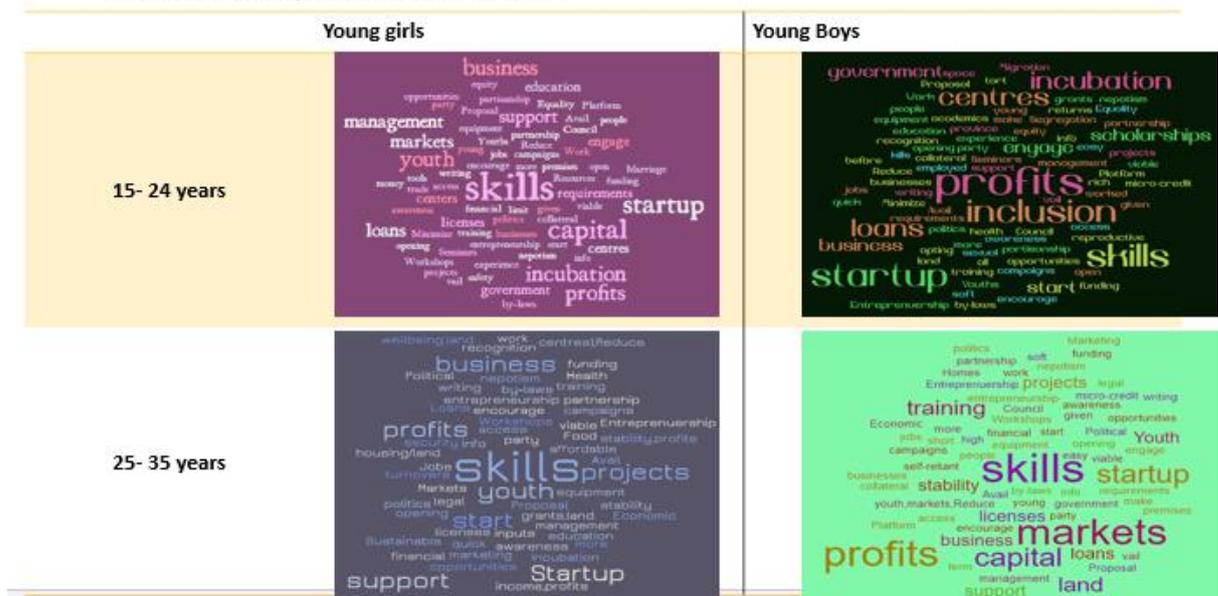
of interpersonal connections, and on whose shoulders rests the responsibility of both success and failure.

In the context of the recent start of SNV’s youth employment projects in Zimbabwe and Zambia, we have the ambition to get a much better insight in challenges and potential in relation to gender-relevant networks among the young women and men we are targeting. To this effect, we are aiming at setting up an action research in partnership with local/national knowledge institutions and/or consultants with a relevant academic background.

In short, what we are focusing on is to acquire deeper insights in how young women and young men are perceiving **how to translate their human capital into productive forms of what they aspire**. It is obvious that this has to be differentiated between young women and young men. At the same time, we need to develop insights in how their wider (gender & age relations) societal and cultural environment influences – in both positive and negative/restrictive ways – the directions and prospects of these ambitions/aspirations.

The two diagrams below provide a summary (and artistic) overview of aspirations and challenges face by young women and young men (source Zimbabwe market scan report).

Youth Profile- Aspirations & Ambitions



voices are clear and amplified. The methodology is also expected to include getting the views and practices of relevant (local) cultural and political authorities, such as female and male family elders, local government authorities and religious leaders (M/F).

The eventual action research methodology will be a joint endeavour by the selected expert/institute and SNV (led by Roy van der Drift who holds a PhD in cultural anthropology (based on research on age-gender power relations in West Africa) and has led the global OYE program in SNV since 2012, hence with a combined academic/development background.

Geographic action research areas will be Eastern, Northern and Southern.

The action research in Zambia is a first concrete assignment that may give ground to longer term knowledge development partnership(s) on youth and youth empowerment on the longer term.

Qualifications and Core Competencies

- Consultant or researcher with a Degree in development/gender/social studies. A Masters will be an added advantage.
- Proven experience in relevant research/study on gender and youth, with at least 10 years' experience